

And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
for makinge of avauntes, as men rede;
And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is,
fro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
for which these wyse clerkes that ben dede
han ever yet proverbed to us yonge,
That firste vertu is to kepe tonge.

And, nere it that I wilne as now tabregge
Diffusioun of speche, I coude almost
A thousand olde stories thee alegge
Of wommen lost, thorough fals and foles bost;
Proverbes canst thyself ynowe, and wost,
Hyeins that vyce, for to been a labbe,
Alseyde men sooth as often as they gabbe.

O tonge, alas! so often herebiforn
Hastow mad many a lady bright of hewe
Seyd: Metawey! the day that I was born!
And many a maydes sorwes for to newe;
And, for the more part, al is untrew
That men of yelp, and it were brought to preve;
Of kinde non avauntour is to leve.

Avauntour and a lyere, al is on;
As thus: I pose, a womman graunte me
Hir love, and seyth that other wol she non,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,
And after I go telle it two or three;
Ywis, I am avauntour at the leste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste.

Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame,
Swich maner folk; what shal I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name,
That never yet bihighte hem this ne that,
Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat?
No wonder is, so God me sende hele,
Though wommen drede with us men to dele.

I sey not this for no mistrust of yow,
Ne for no wys man, but for foles nyce,
And for the harm that in the world is now,
As wel for foly ofte as for malyce;
for wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce
No womman drat, if she be wel avysed;
for wyse ben by foles harm chastysed.

But now to purpos; leve brother dere,
Have al this thing that I have seyde in minde,
And keep thee clos, and be now of good chere,
for at thy day thou shalt me trewe finde.
I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde,
And God toforn, that it shall thee suffyse,
for it shal been right as thou wolt devyse.

for wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde;
Therefore I dar this fully undertake.
Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set, the chartres up to make.
Have now good night, I may no lenger wake;
And bid for me, sin thou art now in blisse,
That God me sende deeth or sone lisse.

Who mighte telle half the joye or feste
Which that the soule of Troilus tho felte,
Heringe the effect of Pandarus biheste?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Gan tho for joye wasten and tomelte,
And al the richesse of his sykes sore
At ones fledde, he felte of hem no more.

But right so as these holtes and these hayes,
That han in winter dede been and dreye,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty lyketh best to pleye;
Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye,
Wex sodenliche his herte ful of joye,
That gladder was ther never man in Troye.

And gan his look on Pandarus up caste
ful sobrelly, and frendly for to see,
And seyde: freend, in Aprille the laste,
As wel thou wost, if it remembre thee,
How neigh the deeth for wo thou founde me;
And how thou didest al thy bisinesse
To knowe of me the cause of my distresse.

Thou wost how longe I it forbar to seye
To thee, that art the man that I best triste;
And peril was it noon to thee bywreye,
That wiste I wel; but tel me, if thee liste,
Sith I so looth was that thyself it wiste,
How dorste I mo tellen of this matere,
That quake now, and no wight may us here?

But natheles, by that God I thee swere,
That, as him list, may al this world governe,
And, if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Myn herte cleve, al were my lyf eterne,
As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
Wolde it biwreye, or dorste, or sholde comen,
for al the good that God made under sonne;

That rather deye I wolde, and determyne,
As thinketh me, now stokked in presoun,
In wrecchednesse, in filthe, and in vermyne,
Caytif to cruel king Agamenoun;
And this, in alle the temples of this toun,
Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee swere,
Tomorwe day, if that thee lyketh here.

And that thou hast so muche ydoon for me,
That I ne may it nevermore deserve,
This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee
A thousand tymes on a morwen sterne,
I can no more, but that I wol thee serve
Right as thy slave, whiderso thou wende,
for evermore, unto my lyves ende!

But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche,
That never in me thou deme swich folye
As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche,
That this, which thou me dost for companye,
I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
I am nought wood, al if I lewed be;
It is not so, that woot I wel, pardee.

But he that goth, for gold or for richesse,
On swich message, calle him what thee list;
And this that thou dost, calle it gentillesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist;
Depart it so, for wyde where is wist
How that there is dyversitee requered
Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered.

And, that thou knowe I thenke nought ne wene
That this servyse a shame be or jape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
Be she never so faire or wel yshape,
Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

But sin that thou hast don me this servyse,
My lyf to save, and for noon hope of mede,
So, for the love of God, this grete emprise
Parforme it out; for now is moste nede,
for high and low, withouten any drede,
I wol alwey thyne bestes alle kepe;
Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe.

Thus held him ech with other wel apayed,
That al the world ne mighte it bet amende;
And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed,
Ech to his owene nedes gan entende.
But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende
for sharp desyr of hope and of plesaunce,
he not forgat his gode governaunce.

But in himself with manhod gan restreyne
Ech rakel dede and ech unbryddel chere,
That alle tho that liven, sooth to seyne,
Ne sholde han wist, by word or by manere,
What that he mente, as touching this matere,
from every wight as fer as is the cloude
he was, so wel dissimulen he coude.

And al the whyl which that I yow devyse,
This was his lyf; with al his fulle might,
By day he was in Martes high servyse,
This is to seyn, in armes as a knight;
And for the more part, the longe night
he lay, and thoughte how that he mighte serve
his lady best, hir thank for to deserve.

Nil I nought swere, although he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas sumwhat discesed,
Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte,
And wolde of that him missed han ben sesed;
But in swich cas man is nought alwey plesed,
for ought I wot, no more than was he;
That can I deme of possibilitee.

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this whyle, as writen is in geste,
he say his lady somtyme; and also
She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste,
And by hir bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warty in this nede,
So as they dorste, how they wolde procede.

But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich awayt alwey, and in swich fere,
Lest any wyght divynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were
As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hir speche aright an ende.

But thilke litel that they speke or wroughte,
His wyse goost took ay of al swich hede,
It semed hir, he wiste what she thoughte
Withouten word, so that it was no nede
To bidde him ought to done, or ought forbode;
for which she thoughte that love, al come it late,
Of alle joye hadde opned hir the yate.

And shortly of this proces for to pace,
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette,
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thonked God she ever with him mette;
So coude he him governe in swich servyse,
That al the world ne mighte it bet devyse.

for why she fond him so discreet in al,
So secret, and of swich obeisaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hir a wal
Of steel, and sheld from every displeasaunce;
That, to ben in his gode governaunce,
So wys he was, she was no more afered,
I mene, as fer as oughte ben requered.

And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr,
Was ever ylyke prest and diligent;
To ese his frend was set al his desyr.
He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent;
He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent.
That never man, as in his frendes nede,
Ne bar him bet than he, withouten drede.

But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
That every word, or sonde, or look, or chere
Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,
In al this whyle, unto his lady dere;
I trowe it were a long thing for to here;
Or of what wight that stant in swich disjoynte,
his wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.

for sothe, I have not herd it doon er this,
In storye noon, ne no man here, I wene;
And though I wolde I coude not, ywis;
for ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene
Neigh half this book, of which him list not wryte;
How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?

But to the grete effect: than sey I thus,
That standing in concord and in quiete
Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this tyme swete,
Save only often mighte they not mete,
Ne layser have hir speches to fulfelle,
That it befel right as I shal yow telle,